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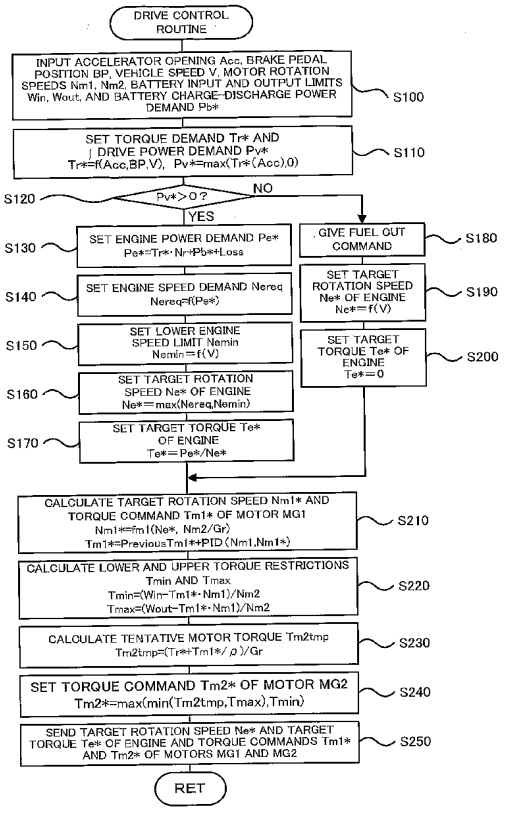
(54) **Title:** HYBRID VEHICLE, CONTROL METHOD OF HYBRID VEHICLE, AND POWER OUTPUT APPRATUS



(57) **Abstract:** When a drive power demand Pv* is greater than 0, the control procedure of the invention sets the greater between an engine speed demand Nereq and a lower engine speed limit Nemin to a target rotation speed Ne* of an engine (step S160). The engine speed demand Nereq represents a rotation speed of the engine at a specific drive point that ensures efficient output of an engine power demand Pe*. The lower engine speed limit Nemin represents a rotation speed of the engine at another specific drive point for a constant-speed drive of a hybrid vehicle at a current vehicle speed V. When the drive power demand Pv* is equal to 0, the control procedure of the invention cuts fuel supply to the engine and sets the lower engine speed limit Nemin to the target rotation speed Ne* of the engine (step S190). The engine is accordingly driven at the rotation speed of not lower than the lower engine speed limit Nemin and has a quick response to a demand for output power increase from the engine. This arrangement desirably reduces the loading of a battery and prevents premature deterioration of the battery.

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